

FREEDOM

Bookfair 2015

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**CORBYN AND THE
GRASSROOTS**

AGAINST APOLITICAL SQUATTING

EYE ART COLLECTIVE

H.M.P. SURVIVAL GUIDE

**HOW DID THE LEFT
FORGET ABOUT PRECARITY?**

2015 ANARCHIST BOOKFAIR SPECIAL

From the Editors...

In true Freedom style, 2015 has been as much of an eventful year as the last. We're back for our second Bookfair edition, following the success of last year's venture, and also our second print publication of 2015 after the release of a single-page freesheet in May. Since closing down the semi-regular newspaper format in 2014, we've tested the water with different approaches as to how best to keep Freedom both up-to-date and accessible to as many people as possible. The website has taken off well, and provides a varied platform whilst keeping an insider's perspective on what's going on in the broader activism of the radical left. We were also always aware that the internet only goes so far in reaching people, and there are many individuals who don't use it, or that often our content can get lost in the vast web of information that is our social media feeds.

As editors we were often asked if we had copies of our paper by people interested and excited by the idea of Freedom, and it would be with a heavy heart that we would direct them towards our website with nothing current to distribute. The freesheet solved this issue, while also producing something easy to send to other places and hand out on protests for free. We hope to continue producing the freesheet on a regular basis in the future and as always we welcome the involvement and contributions of our

comrades.

The website however is still the most essential part of our publishing operation. We've just commissioned a new website, which is still a work in progress.

This Bookfair edition of Freedom has built on the successful foundations of last year. One of the most popular aspects of the 2014 edition was the inclusion of poetry, demonstrating that creativity is an essential and ever relevant form of expression for radical, working class consciousness. There is a flourishing of creativity across the country that mirrors much of what exploded out of the dark days of the 1980s, and as the country is dragged kicking and screaming into the past by the vicious brutality of the Conservative government, we once again find verse and song to be powerful tools of resistance that cannot be silenced.

So that's where we leave you to enjoy the rest of the paper, we hope to see and hear from many of you over the coming months. It's easy to feel despair as we see and feel the effects of this corrupt electoral system destroy lives and communities across the country, but as long as we keep fighting we can, and we will, win.

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Corbyn and the 'Grassroots'

With the rise of Podemos, Syriza and now Jeremy Corbyn, a cluster of nature-based metaphors has been doing the rounds. We hear about how a 'grassroots' movement is needed to keep parties in check, about the 'terrain of struggle' that parliamentary politics can open up, and about how parties can form part of a wider 'ecology of social movements'. It's worth taking these at their word and looking at them from an ecology or systems perspective. All have their merits, but ultimately the view of the State they imply is a little rose tinted.

Change

There's no denying Corbyn has caused a big stir. The various nested systems of British political life all seem to have been affected to some degree, from the state level, to the internal turmoil of the Labour party, right down to the shifted expectations in the minds of the public. When a system goes through this kind of sudden change, it enters a period of chaotic activity and rebuilding, the broken connections of the system scrabbling around for a new configuration. They are moments where possibilities are opened up.

The idea of 'opening up the terrain of struggle' seems to relate at least in part to this: a shift that creates new possibilities for class struggle, through the power of the media and parliament. But taking this view also risks missing another side to the dynamics of system change: how resettling into a new trajectory also removes other possibilities. Take for example the popular sentiment that 'finally we have a principled politician'. This directs the blame for austerity and neoliberalism towards the particular individuals in power, rather than it being the result of the global capitalist system. Supporting this discourse, and its spread via the media, helps to entrench a pattern of thought which bypasses criticism of capitalism and the state. In this sense important potentials in the 'terrain of struggle', from an anarchist perspective, are actually closed off.

Capitalism creates conditions antithetical to collective self-organisation and direct action:

the breakdown of communities, instability of employment, the individualisation of the subject, and now the intangibility of digital relationships. Against this, to build an effective self-organised grassroots requires the spread of skills and documentation of their success. See the explosion of activity around Focus E15 Mothers last year, which spurred on a huge number of self-organised community campaigns in a short space of time. In contrast, Corbyn has so far mobilised many people to attend his rallies and vote for him, but little else.



We need to prepare for these moments of rupture, and step up propaganda when minds become re-opened to change. We shouldn't simply be arguing for why we need to self-organise, but actually give concrete guidance on how to self-organise: distributing ideas that even if not activated now, will set the charges for future shifts.

A real ecology of social movements

Even ignoring Labour, we can't just presume there's already an 'ecology' of left movements just because many call themselves 'left' or 'anti-austerity'. Just having lots of people disconnectedly challenging the government does not produce a system - nor does just going on a big march together. There needs to be regular coordination between groups, the creation of robust dynamic systems, for our actions to become more than the sum of their parts. This is what we've tried to do in London with the Radical Assembly, and the Radical Housing Network also operates on similar lines. We've been able to help coordinate disconnected groups, arrange joint actions, create personal bonds across campaigns and sectarian lines, and form some shared processes. This type of networked action is essential: groups maintaining independence, whilst creating processes that allow them to work together. This is how we can create a robust left ecology, and we don't need the Labour party to make it happen.

[GJ lifeglug.wordpress.org](http://GJlifeglug.wordpress.org)

Photo: Willwal under CC BY-SA

How Did

The Left

Forget About

Precurity?

The service sector contributes 77.8% of GDP. Since 2011 81% of those employed in the UK work in the service sector. 92% of women who work in the UK are employed in the service sector. Only 9% of UK workers are in manufacturing.

This picture is not represent by

the current mainstream left and trade union movement which

overwhelming focusses on the public sector and forever harks back to a time where manufacturing dominated the UK.

The failures in addressing precarious work are a result of stagnation, or an inability by the Left to evolve in the ways that capitalism has. While many older communists will reiterate Marx's point that 'what the bourgeoisie [...] produces, above all, are its own grave diggers' and therefore expect capitalism to reach a fundamental point where its existence will collapse under its own unsustainable weight, it is more likely better to listen to modern commentaries like those of Sylvia Federici who tells us that it is 'bad politics to concentrate on the limits of capitalism in its exploitation drive. It fosters the illusion that capitalism can destroy itself'.

Moving away from a dialogue of workers as an entity capable of overthrowing the status quo, capitalism has created a much greater workforce of individuals more than aware of, and helpless to, their position in relation to the most important phenomenon to effect workers since the Industrial Revolution; Precarity. Born out of New Labour's drive to have every young person go to university; the introduction and increasing of tuition fees; a housing crisis that requires unaffordable rent and includes the birth of the Rentier class; post-crash austerity which continues to attack, and harass, those least able to work and vilify those who need financial support while working due to flat-lining wages; and a refugee crisis created by a War on Terror we might as well have declared on ourselves, precarious work has allowed for a heightened exploitation of workers fuelled by competition and fear.

Most interestingly, precarity has all but been ignored by the wider left. While smaller groups focus on the consequences of austerity and neoliberalism, larger, established signifiers of the left such as the TUC focus on austerity as the enemy towards a utopian vision of a full workers' state and still seek change through reforming the Labour Party, thus expecting to, to

paraphrase bell hooks, dismantle the master's house with his own tools.

These outdated notions of what workers want or need, as well as their insistence on speaking for workers, without engaging with those who work precariously (most likely because the precariat have no fixed abode in work and therefore are unable to commit to paying their union dues) and who remain chained to this rhetoric of class as the one, true oppression are unable to represent today's workers.

Instead what we see are discussions taken over by men who have a perverted nostalgia for the Thatcher years, who fail to see how the new machinations of an evolved capitalism that has moved away from the factories and into the shop-fronts, the hotel floors, the back of the classroom, the hospital waiting rooms, the call centres, and the retirement homes.

While mainstream trade unions continue to live in the past, there is an isolated but hopeful band of young people like Cassie Agbehenu, a trade union organiser and frontwoman of Cheltenham based Riot Grrl band Fight Rosa Fight, who realises the importance of moving away from these privileged positions in Leftist organising, She says:

Something that we're going to start focusing on is political education as a part of everything we do - the movement makes the assumption that everyone reads the paper and has knowledge of politics which is hugely classist and demands a level of educational privilege. I really think this could be so useful in supporting people in understanding how policy decisions in parliament effects their day to day lives and will enable people to organise around these issues more effectively.

This is why I'd rather focus less on the failures of the Left today and more on the budding successes that a stronger engagement and dialogue with an exhausted precariat can have. This means less about working to reform parliamentary politics and using buzzwords like 'mass movement' before workers can think about where their pay cheque will be at the end of the week, and more about dismantling the fear by which precarity thrives. The more we determine the last decade of precarious work's effect on the service sector, and develop an accessible political education which includes this phenomenon the faster the Left can advance towards this evolution in capitalism and fight it head on.

Daniel Dawson



Photo: Peter Marshall - mylondondiary.co.uk

Nuclear

Hinkley

Expansion

In Doubt

Photo: Dave Taylor under CC BY 2.5

Only months after it heralded a 'new era' of nuclear expansion in the UK, the British government has been forced to step in to salvage plans for the expansion of the Hinkley Point nuclear power station in Somerset (see Freedom November 2013). Work to prepare the site for the new 3,200 mega-watt Hinkley Point C twin-reactor (which will take more than 10 years to build) had already slipped behind schedule when the huge financial deal underpinning the project threatened to unravel.

Hinkley C will be the most expensive nuclear plant yet built. Revised estimates suggests the build will cost £24.5bn (although the UK government and its partners originally claimed it would come in at £16bn). Hinkley will use unproven EPR technology which is not yet in production anywhere in the world. Problems that have beset the other EPR plants currently being worked on (in Finland and France) have made pro-nuclear technologists nervous. Even the Supporters of Nuclear Energy (SONE) lobby group concede that EPR developments at the two first sites have "not gone well, technical or economically".

The brazen 'nuclear at any cost' approach of the British state

has attracted criticism from other official agencies at home and abroad. Industry analysts slammed the deal as bad economics. The Austrian government lodged objections with the European Commission, which led to 'a renegotiation of terms' and it has since filed a complaint at the European Court of Justice, claiming that the British state subsidy and price guarantee breach EU rules. The deal may yet be investigated by the Parliamentary 'spending watchdog' the Public Accounts Committee.

The main Hinkley C construction was initially offered to EDF. The firm had been expected to sign a binding contract in November 2014, but that deadline was missed as the company prevaricated; concerned about the project's financial viability and spiralling costs. EDF has been shaping up as a flaky and unreliable contractor. EDF's nuclear construction track record is dire. Its bill for building a new plant in Flamanville, in France, have mushroomed into a £5bn overspend.

With EDF now reluctant to commit, George Osborne announced a £2bn co-funding bid from China: effectively a no-risk insurance policy intended

to lock EDF in to a more robust consortium. Osborne declared: "We want the UK to be China's best partner in the West" when it comes to building new nuclear power sites. This unlikely partnership may prove sufficient to get the Hinkley C project back on track.

Despite the government's problems with the deal, opposition to the Hinkley build has remained marginal. Anti-fracking protests continue to attract significant interest, but the anti-nuclear opposition has lost much of the fire that ignited it in the 1970s and 1980s. Trade unions in the power industry have been cheerleaders for the extension of Hinkley. The Unite union has warned darkly that without a go-ahead for Hinkley C and other nuclear plants the UK faced the "very real prospect of power cuts and the lights going out in the years to come".

It may be ironic that the 'free market' British government's desire to ratchet up its nuclear capacity will be met by an alliance of 'communist' technicians (from China) and employees of a state-owned, nationalised company (in France). But this is scant compensation for the fact the British state is driving ahead with a massive programme of nuclear expansion the logic of which even escapes industrialists, financiers and international regulators.

The government has had to take action to shore up its plans for Hinkley; but what's been almost entirely absent, is a sense of the state being under pressure from an implacable and highly-mobilised counterforce; determined that the expansion programme be halted in its tracks. As the government looks beyond Hinkley to a new network of nuclear site blight, the militancy of the anti-nuclear opposition needs to hot up in response.

Rich Cross



Fromage to the Fromagers

I didn't stand on the picket line but I later told them how they could have best made their picket line effective.

I do all that I can for my local community, all that I can from behind the screen of my laptop, natch.

My Facebook posts telling you that you were wrong are NOT an apology that I did nothing.

I'm just waiting for Twitter to like it and #bepartofit
If you're on strike: you're only in it for yourselves, 'cos I wasn't there.

If you oppose gentrification: you're a gentrifier, 'cos I wasn't there.

If you build the manor: you're not from the manor, 'cos I wasn't there.

I am writing this from the Cereal café.

Tim Wells

Tim Wells' latest collection, *Everything Crash*, is available now from Pinned in the Margins

Five Years

of

GBC



Green and Black Cross Legal is five this winter, born out of the police clampdown on student resistance to increased tuition fees under the coalition government. From stop and search, through mass arrests to political prosecutions, the group works to counter state violence toward protesters and has grown into a fascinating anarchist experiment. In that time we've supported thousands of people from many backgrounds in their rebellions and protests.

From a 24/7 legal support hotline to legal observers on the streets, a hub for gathering evidence from the public on big demos, to facilitating defendants' groups after arrest. We believe in and support the kind of democratic change that comes from below. Our emphasis is on support for people rising up and taking control of the direction of their lives. Many issues occur over and over for a broad range of groups - from housing and climate justice campaigns, to actions by feminists, migrants, anti-fascists, squatters, students, disabled people and more, we see important social struggles being met with repression and prosecution. And within the common themes, there are important variations: we're currently collaborating on new training sessions for people of colour and trans* and non-gender binary folks, whose particular experiences of policing have much to teach us. GBC is committed to non-hierarchical structures, and almost all our work is voluntary. As we supported an increasing number of actions and arrested people, our admin load became overwhelming and we now have

one part-time paid worker to specifically help with this.

The London group meets monthly, and people take turns to be part of the team who manage developments between meetings. As a network across England and Wales, we juggle the tensions of autonomous local groups working alongside the behemoth that is London. Anarchist legal support is done in solidarity, rather than following a 'service provider' model. This includes training groups, where they desire, to become self-sufficient in skills for observing and interacting with the police. Our quarterly Legal Observer trainings are a good place to start for those who want to support dissent but aren't clear where to start. They deliver practical knowledge of how to observe policing and disseminate useful messages about people's rights, equally for those looking to work with a particular group and those who want to use the skills more generally. We also run Know Your Rights workshops, to build confidence for protesters to know what they're getting into legally, knowledge that can undermine the intimidation and harassment practiced routinely by police forces around the country.



Have a look around the bookfair for a leaflet by us and our great chumrades at Legal Defence & Monitoring Group about why you should give some money to movement legal support, and more importantly, all celebrate at our 5th birthday party, Friday the 4th of December at the DIY Space at 96-108 Ormside Street, London, SE15 1TF



*"It's thousands of
years old
their anger
thousands of years
old
is their bitterness
I am only returning
their scattered words
with rhyme and
rhythm
and you fear that
I am spreading fire."
-Gorakh Pandey*

In the winter of January 2014, two anarchists from Calcutta, India, got together to form Eye, which would later become Eye Art Collective, the anarchy-feminist group to host Hysteria FemCom 2015, the country's first feminist convention. What started out as a discussion grew into a wordpress blog, just to give a voice to independent art and culture in the city. Eight others joined to form Eyezine, an arts and culture webzine.

On the night of September 17th, 2014, Eye was reporting on a protest at a university. It was a sit-in peaceful demonstration of about 150 students. Two photojournalists were documenting the students singing and sloganning. The demonstration was against the authorities' negligence in handling the case of molestation on campus, failing to properly investigate and slutshaming the survivor. The vice chancellor of the university had refused to negotiate with the students. Thugs had been sent to threaten students, but things took a turn for the worst..

Three anarchists who later joined Eye first met us there, and here is the account of that night by one of them: "We were at Aurobindo Bhavan, opposite Gate no. 1, singing, when we saw policeman coming towards us. This was around 2am. We got up and started chanting slogans, and fearing an attack, created human barricades to protect ourselves. We saw 5 or 6 Rapid Action Force vans pull in and park outside Gate No.1. There were tear gas canisters and water cannons. Then the main gate, which is always kept shut, was thrown open and policeman, in khakis, in white uniforms and even civil dressed policeman charged towards us and tried to tear down the human barricade by pulling us down beating us up. They were tearing clothes, dragging, groping. My friend, who was part of the human barricade was pulled to the ground and beaten repeatedly on the head till he was unconscious. I jumped in to protect him and the khaki police retreated as they did not want to harm a woman but the civilian dressed cops dragged me away by the legs. I was crying, but they continued to beat me, hit my head and backbone. Two of the protesters jumped in to save me and got beaten severely. The policemen then started hitting the students,

both men and women, on their stomachs, heads and chests. The authorities were present and could see this happening from the other side of the grill. They offered us no help or first aid and refused to even give us water. The police then picked up the protesters, dragged them to the RAF vans and took them away."

The media reported the next day that the students, of what was called the hokolorob movement, had apparently assaulted the police, and no mention was made of the RAF vans. They also alleged that the students had threatened the VC despite the peaceful demonstration, but by then, word had got out: Eyezine had caught the brutal attack on video which the police tried to prevent by shutting all the media out and switching off the lights before attacking the students. The report detailed accounts of the attack, a timeline of events which was vehemently denied by the government, and a very telling video of police violence. The video helped make the legal case for the students, Eyezine gained a larger readership as more reports poured in of protests, social movements and activists and 3 anarchists who were at the protest, and several others, joined to form Eye Art Collective, an anarchy-feminist queer animal-friendly anti-fascist eco-positive group. A red and black logo followed.

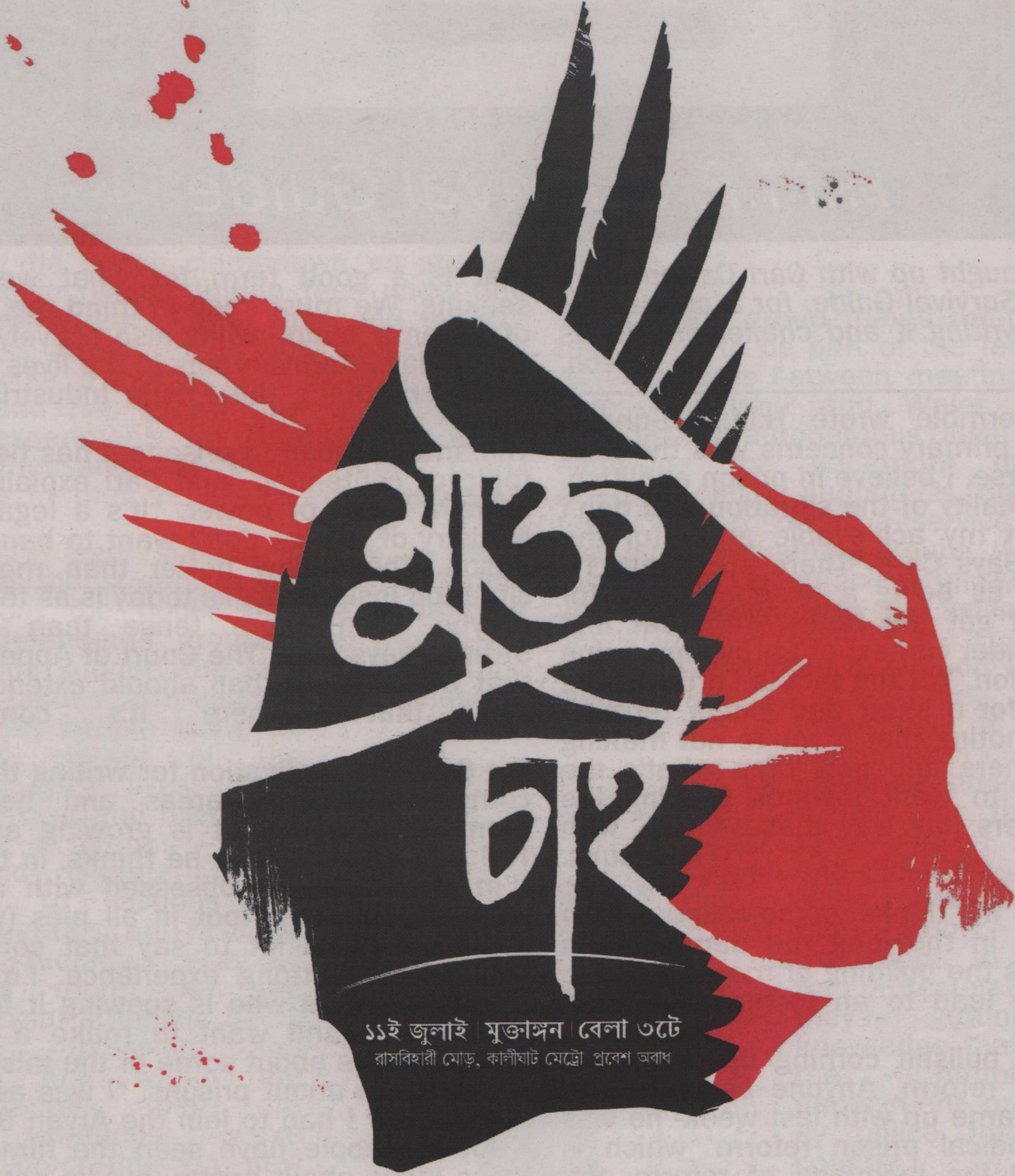
Eyezine (www.eyearcollective.com) is a volunteer run zine which accepts contributions from writers, artists and activists without any discrimination. There is a small team of in-house writers, photographers and editors who cover local news and cultural developments.

We believe personal is political and work to create tangible, sustainable changes around us by challenging society through cultures of dissent. As anarchy-feminists, we acknowledge that patriarchy or the system of a male-dominated society exists throughout the intersecting barriers of class, race, caste and religion present in India. Therefore, in order to address gender oppression, it is important to demolish kyriarchy, an intersectional extension of the idea of patriarchy, by creating an alternate society through grassroots building. We believe, as anarchy-feminists, that we have the right to bodily autonomy and the right to self-rule, which is denied to us by patriarchy, and similar hegemonic systems of power such as capitalism and imperialism. We believe in an intersectional feminism that fights for LGBTQIA+ rights, and acknowledges all womyn's rights, whether fringe or privileged. Therefore, our art, campaigns and activism seek to create a culture of dissent that works to smash and uproot kyriarchy.

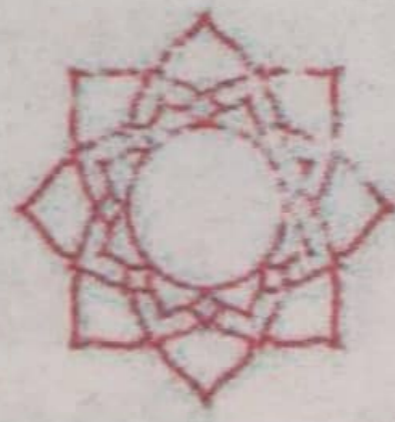
Protest is not enough, a culture of sustained resistance must follow. If you wish to join Eye Art Collective, collaborate on a project, want to write for Eyezine, or simply want to know more about what we do, e-mail us at eyearcollective@gmail.com



প্রতিরোধের সিনেমা-র উদ্যোগে
ছত্রধর মাহাতো সহ সমস্ত রাজনৈতিক বন্দীদের মুক্তির দাবিতে
গণ সাংস্কৃতিক অনুষ্ঠান



বক্তব্যে : সোনি সোরি ডাঃ বিনায়ক সেন রাজীব যাদব অজয় টিজি শুভেন্দু দাশগুপ্ত
গানে : অনুশ্রী-বিপুল নীতিশ রায় সুস্মিত বোস স্বভাব নাটক দল রঞ্জনপ্রসাদ প্রতিরোধের গান
তথ্যচিত্র : জমির কে বন্দী (প্রিজনার্স অফ কনশেন্স) পরিচালনাঃ আনন্দ পটবর্ধন





H.M.P. Survival Guide

Freedom News caught up with Carl Cattermole, author of H.M.P. Survival Guide, for a chat about his reasons for writing it and challenging ideas about prison.

When Carl Cattermole wrote *H.M.P. Survival Guide* one of his primary concerns was the here and now. "Of course, I believe in prison abolition. I also know the reality of the situation and don't want to undercut my achievable goals for the here and now." Says Carl. "There are things I'd like to do, such as being a prison advisor for Jeremy Corbyn. I get the faults with that and understand the wider context of Corbyn not being a long-term solution. Yet the fact is I'd like to be in a game plan for a short and longer term." I agree with Carl, noting that if you're not making changes in the here and now then what's the point? We need to work towards making life better for prisoners any way that we can, with tangible results.

I ask Carl what he thinks of so-called prison reforms that are in the long run damaging to prisoners, such as the building of more women's prisons that only lead to an increase in more women prisoners. "There's a lot of bullshit coming up under the banner of prison reform. Anyone can see that with what Gove came up with last week- he was talking about 'radical prison reform' which is basically stealing the language of reform and manipulating it into something the opposite. There's nothing radical about building call centres in prisons, it's just reinforcing the Prison Industrial Complex." We discussed how many of these reforms, such as moving prisons to the outskirts of cities, only serves to undermine the principles of rehabilitation, or how reform could include the reinstating of the death penalty. "Anyone using the term 'reform' needs to be challenged as to what they mean by it." I mention a speaker at a recent Prison Abolition talk speaking of 'non-reformist reform' and how

that is a good term for what we should be seeking. We must keep in mind the larger goals of prison abolition while also actively fighting for day-to-day improvements in the lives of prisoners and dismantling the Prison Industrial Complex.

The smoking ban in prisoners has been a recent topic of contention, and Carl explains that it is more a clash of power. "It's a legal issue, the Ministry of Justice don't want to ban smoking in prison. They know better than most that the situation inside prisons today is as tense as ever, maybe even more tense than before the Strangeways riots. The Court of Appeal has ruled that the smoking ban should extend to prisons and that's where it's come from."

For Carl, the motivation for writing the book has come from many areas and he feels the momentum behind it is growing and growing. The appeal partly lies, he thinks, in the fact that "I'm not liberal or obsessed with any type of politics. I've got a foot in all pies (we laugh.) I guess I have a lot to say that comes from a genuine and strong experience. I'm not some liberal dickhead who is spewing it for a career, I've lived it and want to make a difference." He also talks about some of the misconceptions people have about prisons. "I was asked when I came out if I had to join the Aryan Brotherhood! A lot of people have seen the films and have these ideas about prison, but its not like that. It can be funny at times what people think but realistically when you're faced with doing time it can be very frightening. On the other hand, a lot of people think they can talk about and judge people on this side of the system even when they know nothing. Lots of people would benefit from reading this book- it's hard to be a law-abiding citizen in 2015."

H.M.P. Survival Guide is available from Freedom Bookshop, £4. It is also free to download online.

Poem III

This is a post-Marxist
post-feminist
post-colonialist
post-gender queer
post post-racism
post postmodernist
post post-retro
post hetero
post-poetry
poem

This poem is too cute to take on terms like *intersectionality*
like *misogyny*
like *reality*

This poem is drowning in the floods
created by UKIP
and the two men in the Macklemore music video
holding hands and jumping
into a sea of convention

This poem is intentionally still stuck in 2013
wearing *YOLO* and *Geek* t-shirts
licking rusty hammers and swinging on dirty machinery

It is twerking on the head of a blurred line
and it is being lawfully shot at by police
(in Tottenham in Ferguson in...)
at the same time
history is being revised

The camera doesn't lie
and neither does this poem
but the truth hurts like a badly-timed cliché
and your ears are closed

Check your fucking privilege says this poem
question authority says this poem
resist the government
take your stroke-
prone finger away from your chin
and use it to drum
on the skin of rebellion says this poem

The water is troubled
this poem is unsettled
its lines are drawn

Keith Jarrett

Keith Jarrett's collection, I Speak Home, is available now.

Against Apolitical Squatting!

In North London, an eight-month squat is evicted by pigs and three are arrested under Section 144, the 2012 ban on residential squatting. A man in a SUPPORT YOUR LOCAL SQUAT t-shirt waits for NELSN to forward a text. Two arrive from a council-estate squat further north. Builders begin to secure the building. Against Section 144, against increasing precariousness and repression, broken self-identity and fractured networks, London squatting seems to have begun a coming-to-terms.

Attempts to surround the fragility of the squat scene with nostalgia have come thick and fast: Remember the Squatters' Union; remember unrestricted residential squatting; remember squatters' rights. As ever this nostalgia is a thinly disguised dose of forgetfulness: Squatting has always meant struggle; and no mourning for a golden age can deny the permanence of our struggles and the permanent need to politicise them.

In the blur of this permanence, however, squatting has been increasingly forced into the temporary. Court papers are served quicker and quicker, evictions become fortnightly rituals, and the looming ban on commercial squatting places

squatters before an ever shortening horizon. The loss inflicted by the 2012 ban is a collective memory permanently recalled by the imminence of the next.

Organic as this repression seems, resistance is sprouting everywhere. Squatting continues to prove itself as direct action against power. People rip down the fences at the Aylesbury; squatters refuse to stop squatting residential. On the continent, in Naples, Amsterdam, Calais and elsewhere, mass occupations continue in the context of illegality.

In Naples, autonomists occupy empty buildings in solidarity with homeless migrants. 'Homes for All' is not a request but a strategy. In Amsterdam, squats were cracked in solidarity with occupations at the University, providing bases for mobilisation and symbolic and material support. The mass squats by migrants and small numbers of anarchist comrades still sprout in the cracks of state power and violence in Calais. Occupations stand as clear markers of self-determination and the will to create communities and cultures of resistance wherever people stay.

The forms of squatting able to resist repression will fit the changing needs of larger struggles while emphasising squatting as struggle. In escalated situations, such as Naples or Calais, squatting is generalised by its use in creating temporary autonomous zones and communities of resistance. In Amsterdam, squats broaden

the free education struggle beyond the University while providing the mechanisms for its escalation.

In situations where squatting is increasingly deescalated and isolated, the task is to generalise and re-politicise the squatting resistance. The old networks and forms-of-life are dragging into a state of alienation and disassociation: between squatters and larger struggles, between the varying and sometimes contradictory uses of squatting, between squatting collectives who know nothing of one another, between comrades. In the vacuum of this disassociation, new informal organisation and action must continue to grow.

**FUCK REGENERATION! FUCK SECTION 144! FUCK PASSIVE RESISTANCE!
AGAINST APOLITICAL SQUATTING!
FOR SELF-DETERMINED, CLASS STRUGGLE SQUATTING!**

Squatters and Homeless Autonomy is a London squatting collective working to combat gentrification and establish autonomous anti-capitalist spaces. Squatting the RBS building on Charing-Cross Road over Christmas 2014, they were also involved in the Institute of Dissidents - the occupied Institute of Directors building on Pall Mall - and have run temporary anarchist spaces at Neal Street and St James's Square. In September the collective occupied the Mamelon Tower pub to oppose the eviction of tenants there and plans to turn it into upmarket flats.

SQUATTERS & HOMELESS AUTONOMY

Book Review

The Scourge of Soho: the controversial career of SAS hero Detective Sergeant Harry Challenor MM

- Dick Kirby

Pen and Sword True Crime 2013

"This is a book about a tragic hero. Harry Challenor, a much-decorated soldier, went on to join the police and become a Detective Sergeant in Soho, the entertainment centre of London. A boisterous eccentric who did not much care for office work, he got on well with his colleagues. The "gangsters, thugs, pimps and strong-arm men of Soho" were so terrified of him that they were "prepared to make a capital outlay of £1,000 (£16,000 by today's standards) to rid themselves of the pestilential Challenor", until they found that 'a skinny little anarchist, who was unknown to them, had done it for them free of charge'."

There is a photograph of me, captioned "Donald Room - the man who brought about Challenor's downfall." I accept the term "skinny" but not "little"; I am of at least average height.

Taking part in a peaceful demonstration, I was arrested, slapped around and charged with carrying a piece of broken brick to be used as a missile. Fortunately, he made a stupid mistake. He said he had taken the brick from my pocket. It was proved in court that there had never been a brick in any of my pockets, and I was acquitted.

At first perusal, *The Scourge of Soho* might be taken for a work of thorough research. Mr Kirby recorded interviews with Mr Challenor himself and with many people who had known him, and thoroughly studied many sources related to Challenor's life. However, there are no interviews with any of Challenor's victims or enemies. Sources critical of Challenor are either arbitrarily derogated or ignored. No attempt is made to study the extensive records of the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL, now called Liberty), which had been worried about Challenor for some

time before his downfall. Challenor's downfall was chiefly due to a man of whom the book makes no mention, Henry Brooke, who was Home Secretary at the time, who called a midnight press conference, following a crowded demonstration against the Greek royals, who were on a state visit to London. It happened that the Queen was among the dignitaries who were booed. Mr Brooke said to the assembled reporters, "The Queen of Britain was booed tonight, and I am furious". Of course this was not a direct order, but it was evidently taken as a hint by DS Challenor, who already had a reputation for planting weapons on suspected criminals. Next day he arrested me, took me to a detention room and said "Boo the Queen, would you?" then took from his pocket a piece of brick wrapped in newspaper and said "Carrying an offensive weapon, you can get two years for that."

Mr Kirby remarks that, at the trial of Challenor and his unfortunate acolytes, I might have been recalled to clarify some point about the forensic science evidence, "But would the word of a self-confessed anarchist have been accepted by the jury?" The jury had not been told that I was an anarchist. Mr Victor Durand, QC, for the defence, asked me who published my cartoons: "My biggest single market is the Daily Mirror, and I am also published in The Spectator, Peace News, and She." "And the Daily Worker?" "No. I have nothing to do with the Communist Party." Mr Durand was clearly surprised by my answer. It was common for people of the establishment persuasion to believe that anyone who expressed opinions opposing tyranny and privilege must be an admirer of tyranny in Stalin's Russia; but a learned QC should have known better. There was a whitewashed report into these cases of planting weapons, and an unpublished report, perhaps more impartial, currently in the Public Records Office, file number HO\287\1463. It was completed in 1970, and will be released for publication in 2042.

Donald Room



Book Reviews

Blacklisted: The Secret War between Big Business and Union Activists

-Dave Smith and Phil Chamberlain
New Internationalist 2015

This is an important book; it documents the impact of a conspiracy by employers to deny work to trade unionists. The book focuses on construction, but touches on it happening elsewhere, such as on offshore rigs. It has also happened in health and social care to whistle-blowers.

The book details the human cost of blacklisting, in terms of relationships breaking down, health problems, poverty and even suicide. There is also a secondary cost: because of the absence of effective health and safety reps, the UK construction sector has an appalling record of death and serious accidents at work. Employers view the additional costs that come with health and safety as an

unnecessary expense, all too often paid with workers' lives. To defend that position, the employers were prepared to go to great lengths to protect their blacklisting machinery. The book mainly covers the activities of the Consulting Association, which was set up from the ashes of the Economic League, a previous blacklisting organisation, in 1993. There was assistance from elements of the state in this, and the book considers whether some right-wing union officials colluded with the employers in the context of inter-union rivalry, but concludes it wasn't likely.

It is also interesting to see that it was not just old-style predatory firms involved in blacklisting: Skanska, a Swedish multinational, were heavily implicated, giving the lie to the idea that this practice is something that can just be reformed or legislated away. The law is also stacked against anyone blacklisted, as there are time limits for bringing cases that are hard to meet. The book details various responses to blacklisting, but only taking sustained action

seems to get much in the way of results.

Anarchists, of course, expect employers and the state to act against the interests of workers standing up for themselves. Anarchists were involved in the Building Worker Group, particularly around the Laing's lockout in 1985. In the 80s and 90s, Black Flag covered the Economic League and helped set up League Watch, a group dedicated to exposing and opposing them. Brian Bamford and Derek Pattison in Tameside have worked hard to support and raise awareness of the Manchester electricians sacked in 2003.

But the experience of supporting workers in this struggle also suggests anarchists need a better security culture - where names and details are not needlessly given out in social media, waiting for HR to harvest them in their own amateur version of the Consulting Association.

Svartfrosk

Anthropology, Ecology, and Anarchism: A Brian Morris Reader Brian Morris PM Press, 2015

Its no exaggeration to say, one of the biggest negative influences on anarchism is its academisation. Having our ideas lost through their needless rendering into an intellectual 'theory', seeing a series of lofty egos split hairs on the minutiae, the suspicious growth in 'expertise' and 'experts' on a subject etc etc. All very pernicious stuff. Brian Morris seems to be in a (not-so) elite club of one of the few people I can think of who defends anarchism as most ordinary social anarchists would see it, and he approaches the exposition of his ideas as something of an equal without the pomp you'd associate with quite a few of his academic colleagues.

For those of you not familiar with Brian Morris, you're in for sort of a treat. His background primarily is in

anthropology (the study of human culture) particularly in Southern India, the field-work summary of which is partially present in this book, but being a multi-disciplinarian he's something of an ecologist, philosopher and political theorist as well which is conveyed very well here.

I'm personally, quite fortunate to have sat through a lecture Morris gave defending the ideas of Bakunin, which he gave in conjunction with the Anarchist Federation for the bicentenary of the birth of Bakunin a couple of years ago and that's as good an introduction to him as one could ask. Bottom line is, Morris defends an anarchism as most anarchists would see it.

The book is essentially a series of essays (fifteen to be precise) covering a number of diverse topics. I will say straight out that I found two of them heavy going and for the life of me I can't

athom what was being said, but the remaining take on something quite important. Firstly, he defends anarchism against the distortions of post-modernists, Marxists, cranks and bourgeois theorists. Secondly, he summarises and presents, within the contemporary, the ideas of Rucker, Bookchin, but above all Kropotkin. Thirdly, he reflects heavily on ecology putting forward a strong robust anti-capitalist platform and fourthly he draws on and expands some ideas within the sphere of anthropology, particularly critiquing Buddhism, investigating the practice of stateless people and looking at some of the background to Engels' 'The Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State'. A deeper reading of some of this work I couldn't emphasise strongly enough, in sheer terms of its brevity, clarity and contemporary insight.

Joe Maguire

The Best-Laid Plans

Drifts here together with his buddy
they pitch up with prayers and plans
A stake for a patch where they can scratch out
a living with their own hands
The preacher says labour makes you holy
your gold must be earned not panned
But nobody never gets to heaven
and nobody gets no land

Boss at the ranch house has his treasures
his lady and livestock grand
Bindlestiffs come to find salvation
to save and to turn their hand
But the stairway gives out before the landing
that's seared with the owner's brand
But nobody never gets to heaven
and nobody gets no land

I know that our toil earns just for owners
my fancies have long been canned
Shot with your dog when he got useless
and crushed with your dead right hand
Why don't these dreamers ever wake up?
and why don't they understand
That nobody never gets to heaven
and nobody gets no land

Janine Booth

Mostly Hating Tories, available for £3 + p&p from www.janinebooth.com/mostly

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